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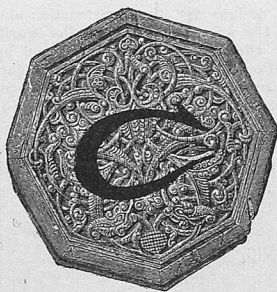
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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



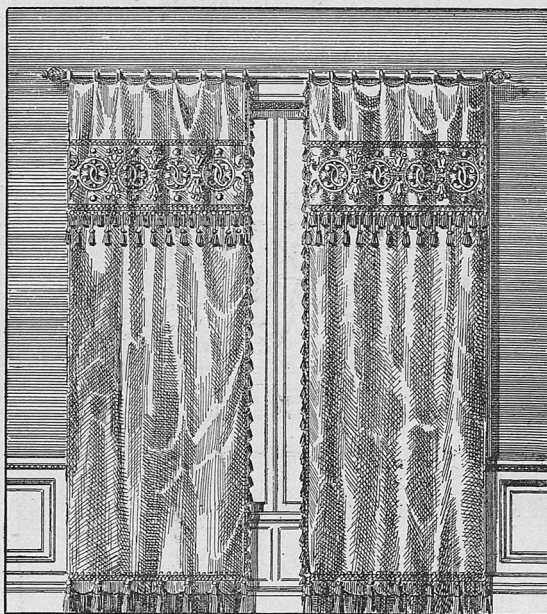
## A LONDON MUSIC ROOM.

BY  
MADGE HEPWORTH DIXON.

COMPLAINT is made now-a-days that fashions in furniture are becoming as arbitrary as the decrees which a few years ago made our women folk adopt that hideous excrescence called a chignon,

and to day burden themselves with the no less ungraceful *tournaire*.

One season these critics grumble, Cairene work and Oriental hangings reign supreme; another, Chippendale furniture and its accompaniment of satin wood and Pompadour draperies obtain favor, and hey, presto! not only our drawing-rooms and boudoirs, but our very staircases, are transformed out of all likeness to themselves in the new rage for white wood! Just now, it is true, London is seized with one of its periodical crazes. Artistic decoration is the amusement of the hour, and white wood, white fitments, white furniture, white glasses, white china, everything



BALCONY PORTIERE, BERKELEY LYCEUM THEATRE. (SEE PAGE 50).

in our interiors, in short, which can be made or converted into a startling, virgin whiteness is dubbed 'perfect' and voted exquisite taste.

To be sure, there are still sceptics who proclaim the unsuitability and the cheerlessness of white wood for bleak Northern climates.

Provisions, it must be confessed, of the aspect of this soillable surface subject to the outside fogs and smuts of the largest city in the world, and the inside smoke of our open coal fires had flitted before me. But I must own myself vanquished. I have lately seen a modification of the fashionable craze which wholly converted me. It was an apartment so harmonious, so original, so exactly adapted to the purpose for which it was required that it seemed difficult not only to find fault, but to suggest an improvement in its arrangement and decoration. Let me hasten to say that it was a music-room—a music-room in the house of a lady well known in London for her excellent voice, musical taste, and for the circle of well known artists for which the very rooms I am describing is the *rendezvous*.

The drawing room, leading into an oriental tea room on the left hand, communicated with the music room on the right, the first of the three pieces only having absolute white fitments. The latter was painted the softest, palest, shade of *celadon*

green, a tint in delicate harmony with the quaint white screen composed of Greek lyres which separate the two rooms above the folding doors. The drawing-room, I may briefly say, was a beautiful combination of apricot and white. The walls and ceiling were hung in this soft, warm color, a large dull gold Japanese umbrella taking the place of the ordinary ugly rose in the middle of the ceiling. The fire place in white wood, ornamented with small gold curtains, was the centre of a delightfully built 'fitment' which led the eye, by its graceful curve, in the direction of the music-room. Divans covered with dull Indian stuff surrounded the fire place, on which oblong cushions of deep sapphire blue and a reticent color which can best be described as the tint of old wine, were scattered about. The 'fitment' contained also china, knick-knacks, and a comfortable corner-seat with a snug curtain to keep away draughts. The panelled dado was, it is needless to say, of white wood, as was the framework of the doors, with the quaint screen already mentioned.

The music-room itself irresistibly suggested a picture by Mr. Alma Tadema. It was as cool, empty and ornamentless as an apartment arranged primarily for sound should be, but there was a simplicity and grace about it which took one back to the stately days of Pericles. Here were neither screens, tables, chairs, *bibelots*, nor china. No modern impediments. No clinging draperies to drown the voice, neither books nor pictures to break the vibrations.

On entering, the eye travelled spontaneously to a raised dais at the further end of the room; an artistically carved dais standing in an alcove hung with gold leather paper, topped by a frieze of orange gold and green. In this recess stood the central object of the apartment—a grand piano.

Behind a Greek fretwork, through which the light came softly, a deep crimson divan flanking the piano, and everywhere tiger skins, golden lyres and long elbow-cushions suggestive of sunny Grecian climes. The parquet floor was matless and carpetless, the only furniture breaking the lines of the room being two artistic divans formed in the shape of lyres, and covered with deep sapphire blue, on which some gold cushions of quaint oblong shape lay. Over the folding doors, an upright row of palm leaf fans made an original ornament, the centre rose of the ceiling being formed by a group of these simple but decorative screens. The walls, woodwork and ceiling were all in faint but slightly varying shades of *celadon* green, the over-mantel being formed of a tall glass (the frame of which was tinted the color of the room) draped with pongee draperies of turson color, relieved with a Greek pattern of conventional birds in dull pink. The only ornament of the room was a Greek clock on the chimney piece, and one or two primitive earthenware vases containing long grasses which broke the somewhat severe lines of the walls.

I must not forget to add that columns covered in plush replaced the ordinary hangings at the sides of the window, an excellent arrangement for a music room, as every additional hanging helps, as singers tell us, to obscure the sound of the voice. The piano was covered with a case especially designed for the room. It was composed of fawn colored Roman satin worked with lyres, and a capital Greek scroll pattern in dull pinks and greens. The music stool was of course to match. An effective arrangement of light was contrived at night by hanging a pink shaded lamp outside the window so that its warm rays reached the interior through the pattern of the Greek fretwork, which entirely covered the panes; a detail as pretty in its way as the Greek inscription written over the alcove dedicated to the divine art. 'Keep music in your hearts' was the felicitous line quoted; and who, having listened to the sweet strains of a captivating singer's voice in the harmonious setting of this music-room, could help obeying the happy injunction?

